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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL STUTTGART
TO AMEMBASSY BONN
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4158
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUESSELDORG
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION USBERLIN
USEUCOM VAIHINGEN

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USEUCOM FOR TLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: REACTION TO GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION IN BADEN-
WUERTTEMBERG

REF: STUTTGART 0276

1. SUMMARY. MINISTER-PRESIDENT FILBINGER IS CONFRONTED WITH REBELLION FROM CDU RANKS OVER HIS RECENT CABINET REORGANIZATION. AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CDU FRAKTION OF THE LANDTAG HAS BEEN CALLED FOR FEB. 16-17 AND DISCUSSION IS LIKELY TO BE STORMY. THE CDU FRAKTION IS MIFFED AT NOT BEING ADEQUATELY CONSULTED BEFOREHAND AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO FILBINGER'S DECISION TO SPLIT THE CULTURE MINISTRY INTO TWO
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PARTS. HIS CHOICE OF MINISTERS TO HEAD THE TWO NEW MINISTRIES IS ALSO QUESTIONED. CRITICISM OF THE DECISIONS ALSO COMES FROM THE PRESS AND FROM THE UNIVERSITIES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE CDU FRAKTION WLL BE BROUGHT INTO LINE, HOWEVER, AND THE CABINET REORGANIZATION APPROVED WHEN IT COMES UP FOR A VOTE IN THE LANDTAG, PROBABLY ON FEB. 22. HOWEVER, FILBINGER MIGHT COME OUT OF IT ALL WITH A SLIGHTLY TARNISHED IMAGE AS A RESULT OF

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HIS LESS THAN SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THE WHOLE BUSINESS. END SUMMARY.

2. WE WERE A BIT HASTY IN OUR JUDGMENT (REFTEL) THAT MINISTER-PRESIDENT FILBINGER HAD PROBABLY ADEQUATELY PROTECTED HIS FLANKS WITHIN THE CDU IN REORGANIZING THE LAND GOVERNMENT LATE LAST WEEK. ON THE CONTRARY, HIS DECISIONS ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO HEAVY CRITICISM FROM WITHIN THE LANDTAG'S CDU FRAKTION AS WELL AS FROM THE OPPOSITION AND THE LOCAL PRESS. AS A RESULT, AN EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE CDU FRAKTION IS TO BE HELD AT SINDELFINGEN FEBRUARY 16-17 TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM THE REORGANIZATION AND ALSO TO ELECT A NEW FRAKTION LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER TO SUCCEED SPAETH AND LUDWIG RESPECTIVELY WHO HAVE BEEN NAMED TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE AID OF THE MEETING IS TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CDU FRAKTION BEFORE THE LANDTAG IS CALLED UPON TO APPROVE THE CABINET REORGANIZATION, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR ON FEBRUARY 22.

3. THE PRESS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, NEEDLED FILBINGER FOR WHAT WAS SEEN AS A HASTY, LAST-MINUTE IMPROVISATION IN THE CABINET REORGANIZATION. DURING A TV ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION EARLIER THIS WEEK FILBINGER (WITH SPAETH ALONGSIDE) SHOWED HIMSELF TO BE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO SUCH CRITICISM, WHICH HE DISMISSED AS WHOLLY UNFOUNDED AND STEMMING FROM RECKLESS ADVANCE SPECULATION OVER WHAT HIS ULTIMATE DECISIONS MIGHT BE. HE HAD INTENDED TO FORM A STRONG, NEW CABINET WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE 1980 LANDTAG
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ELECTIONS AND, HE SAID, THIS IS WHAT HE HAD DONE.

4. FILBINGER DID CONSULT WITHIN THE CDU FRAKTION BEFORE ANNOUNCING THE NEW APPOINTMENTS, BUT APPARENTLY THIS WAS NOT DONE IN SYSTEMATIC FASHIONAND HE DID NOT CANVASS THE CDU FRAKTION AS A WHOLE IN ADVANCE OF HIS DECISIONS. THE REBELLION IN THE CDU RANKS DOES NOT STEM SOLELY FROM WOUNDED PRIDE, HOWEVER, FOR THERE ARE SOME FAIRLY BASIC RESERVATIONS OVER CERTAIN OF FILBINGER'S DECISIONS. SOME ILL FEELING HAS ALSO BEEN GENERATED WITHIN THE CDU FRAKTION BY THE BELIEF THAT SPAETH, EAGER TO ENTER THE CABINET, WAS ONLY TOO READY TO RUBBER-STAMP FILBINGER'S DECISIONS AND TO COOPERATE WITH HIM RATHER THAN DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF THE CDU FRAKTION WHOSE LEADER HE WAS AND, FOR THE TIME BEING, STILL IS. "TREASON" IS HOW SOME CDU HARDLINERS DESCRIBE SPAETH'S ROLE.

5. THE TWO ISSUES THAT ARE MORE CONTROVERSIAL IN THE CABINET REORGANIZATION ARE FILBINGER'S DECISION TO DIVIDE THE CULTURE MINISTRY INTO TWO SEPARATE MINISTRIES, AND HIS CHOICE OF MINISTERS TO FILL THE TWO NEW POSTS. MANY MEMBERS OF THE CDU FRAKTION, AS WELL AS THE SPD, FEEL THAT INFLATING THE CULTURE MINISTRY INTO TWO SEPARATE MINISTRIES IS WHOLLY UNWARRANTED. A CDU LANDTAG

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DEPUTY TELLS US THAT AT THE MEETING WITH CDU FRAKTION LEADERS PRIOR TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CABINET CHANGES ON FEB. 11, DR. MANFRED WOERNER, CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY, COUNTERED FILBINGER'S ASSERTION THAT THE CULTURE MINISTRY WAS "TOO BIG" FOR ONE MINISTER. WOERNER SAID THAT IF FILBINGER'S REASONING WAS SOUND THEN THE FEDERAL DEFENSE MINISTRY WAS TOO BIG TO BE HEADED BY ONE MAN AND SHOULD INSTEAD BE DIVIDED INTO SIX SEPARATE MINISTRIES.

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WUERTTEMBERG

6. WHETHER BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION TO SPLITTING THE CULTURE MINISTRY INTO TWO PARTS OR OUT OF RESENTMENT OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH THE REFORM IS TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT, THERE HAS BEEN A SUDDEN AND SURPRISING OUTFLOW OF SUPPORT FOR CULTURE MINISTER HAHN. THOUGH HAHN HAS OFTEN BEEN THE TARGET OF CRITICISM FROM THE PRESS AND FROM WITHIN THE UNIVERSITIES, THESE SAME QUARTERS

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NOW DEPLORE THAT HAHN IS BEING ASKED TO STEP DOWN TO MAKE WAY FOR TWO "UNKNOWNS," I.E., ENGLER AND HERZOG. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PROFESSORS IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG'S UNIVERSITIES
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ARE NOW PROTESTING HAHN'S DEPARTURE AND URGING THAT HE BE KEPT ON, AND SOME JOURNALISTS ARE PRIVATELY DEFENDING HAHN AS BEING A VICTIM OF FILBINGER'S ARBITRARY WHIMS. EVEN THE FDP FRAKTION LEADER, WHO WAS A FREQUENT OPPONENT OF HAHN AND HIS POLICIES WITHIN THE LANDTAG, NOW FINDS IT POLITIC TO CONDEMN "THE DEPLORABLE LACK OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE OF THE CDU FOR A MAN FROM ITS OWN RANKS WHO HAS ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH." AS FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVIDING THE CULTURE MINSTRY INTO TWO PARTS, HOWEVER, ONLY THE FDP GIVES IT FULL SUPPORT.

7. THUS FAR THE PRESS HAS BEEN GUARDED IN ITS REACTION TO APPOINTMENT OF ENGLER AND HERZOG TO HEAD THE TWO NEW MINISTRIES TO BE CARVED FROM THE PRESENT CULTURE MINISTRY. THE SPD AND FDP, OF COURSE, HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO RESIST SUGGESTING THAT THE CDU ITSELF IS SO SHORT ON CULTURE THAT IT HAD TO BRING IN SOMEONE (HERZOG) FROM ANOTHER LAND TO HEAD UP ONE OF THE TWO NEW MINISTRIES. FOR THE CDU FRAKTION HERZOG NOT ONLY COMES FROM OUTSIDE THE LAND BUT HE IS AN UNKNOWN WHO IS BEING IMPOSED ON THEM. AS FOR ENGLER, CRITICISM OF HIS ELECTION TOTHE POST OF RECTOR OF FREIBURG UNIVERSITY WITH LEFTIST SUPPORT CONTINUES, AND IT HAS ALSO BEEN POINTED OUT THAT ENGLER HAS NOT BEEN A MEMBER OF ANY PARTY. (WE UNDERSTAND THAT ENGLER HAS HASTILY SOUGHT TO IMPROVE HIS CREDENTIALS BY APPLYING ON FEB. 15 FOR CDU MEMBERSHIP.)

8. THE QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS BALANCE WITHIN THE CABINET SEEMS NO LONGER TO BE AN ISSUE AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, BUT THE MERE FACT THAT THIS ISSUE WAS PERMITTED TO ARISE REFLECTS ON THE CARE -- OR LACK THEREOF -- WITH WHICH THE CABINET REORGANIZATION WAS PUT TOGETHER. THE PROTESTANT BISHOP OF WUERTTEMBERG, WHO WITH HIS BADEN COLLEAGUE PRESSURED FILBINGER INTO APPOINTING A PROTESTANT TO FILL ONE OF THE TWO NEW CULTURAL POSTS (REFTEL), TELLS US THAT IT HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG
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THAT WHENEVER THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT IS CATHOLIC THE CULTURE MINISTER IS TO BE A PROTESTANT, AND VICE VERSA. THE BISHOP ADDED THAT HIS CATHOLIC CHURCH COLLEAGUES, FAR FROM OBJECTING TO THE PROTESTANT DEMARCHE TO FILBINGER, SAID THAT THE PROTESTANT LEADERS WERE IN THE RIGHT AND HAD DONE THE PROPER THING.

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9. A LANDTAG DEPUTY HAS TOLD US THAT WHILE DISCUSSION AT THE CDU MEETING FEB. 16-17 IS LIKELY TO BE STORMY, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD THE DIFFERENCES WILL BE PATCHED OVER AND PARTY DISCIPLINE WILL PREVAIL. A FEW CDU DIEHARDS MIGHT STILL BREAK RANKS AND NOT VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE CABINET REFORM DURING THE LANDTAG DEBATE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE CDU HAS 71 OF THE 121 LANDTAG MEMBERS AND ONLY A SIMPLE MAJORITY IS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL OF THE CABINET REORGANIZATION, THE CDU WOULD SEEM TO BE IN NO DIFFICULTY, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT MAY BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE 9 FDP VOTES IN THE LANDTAG.

10. COMMENT: THE STORM FILBINGER HAS CAUSED WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY BY HIS CABINET REORGANIZATION MAY THEREFORE PROVE TO BE ONLY A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT. HOWEVER, IT COULD HAVE SOME LONGER LASTING EFFECTS TO THE EXTENT THAT FILBINGER'S PRESTIGE AND IMAGE, WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, WILL HAVE SUFFERED FROM WHAT LOOKS TO BE HIS LESS THAN SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THE WHOLE BUSINESS.MILLER

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